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FM AMCONSUL PESHAWAR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8028
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE 4801
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE 1907
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI IMMEDIATE 1915
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 1541
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 1177
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0943
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 0759
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE 0853
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE IMMEDIATE 0808
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 0759
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PESHAWAR 000118

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 6/1/2019
TAGS: PTER ASEC PGOV MOPS PK
SUBJECT: PESHAWAR SECURITY TIGHTENED IN THE WAKE OF MULTIPLE
BOMBINGS, THREATS

REF: PESHAWAR 111

CLASSIFIED BY: Lynne Tracy, Principal Officer, U.S. Consulate
Peshawar, U.S. Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (c), (d)

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: A series of VBIED attacks in Peshawar killed eleven and wounded over seventy; provincial security officials believe that the total would have been significantly higher had the largest of the bombs reached its true target. The Peshawar District Coordination Officer (DCO) has reacted by imposing restrictions under Section 144, a portion of the Pakistani criminal code usually used to minimize security hazards during times of mass demonstrations. The government tells us that continued security fears, not crowd control, have driven the decision to implement Section 144. Militant promises of retaliation for operations in Swat and continuing credible threat reporting against Consulate personnel and facilities underscore the likelihood of further violence against Pakistani and U.S. interests in Peshawar and other part of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). End summary.

Three Bombings and a Firefight in Peshawar

¶2. (U) In the early evening of May 28, two approximately 5 kg bombs carried by motorbikes were detonated in the Qissa Khawani Bazaar area in Peshawar's Old City during the peak pre-dinner shopping time. (Note: The two recent bombing attacks targeting Peshawar on May 16 and May 22 were also in the general area of this bazaar - reftel. The Old City has been off limits to Consulate personnel since 2006.) Press reports indicate that eight were killed and over seventy injured in the blasts - a low figure, given the congestion of the area, that underlines the small size of the bombs. In the wake of the explosions, militants fired on responding security forces near the site of

the blasts; in the ensuing firefight two militants were killed and two others arrested.

¶3. (C) Approximately thirty minutes later, a double-cab pickup loaded with what Consulate security contacts estimate to have been 140 kg of explosives rammed a police van near a police checkpost on the southern outskirts of Peshawar and detonated, killing three police and injuring three others. Consulate security contacts speculate that, given the imbalance between the large size of the bomb and the relative insignificance of the target, the bomb had been intended for another target inside Peshawar city but was diverted by the driver.

Section 144 Imposed

¶4. (U) In the wake of the three attacks, Peshawar District Coordination Officer (DCO) Sahibzada Muhammad Anis announced that he was banning the entry of all Afghan refugees into Peshawar and imposing Section 144 of Pakistan's Criminal Procedure Code would be imposed for the period of one month. This clause in the law prohibits the gathering of five or more persons in public places; processions and rallies of any kind; the driving of cars with tinted windows; the public display of arms and ammunition; and the riding of motorcycles by two or more people (a common method of transportation for assassinations in Pakistan).

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¶5. (C) Section 144 has in the past been periodically imposed on Peshawar in the past for periods of 1-3 months, but exclusively during times when large demonstrations and political or sectarian tensions have been expected. In the past few years, it has been announced during a period of upheaval over Danish cartoons portraying the Prophet Mohammed, at various times during the anti-Musharraf Lawyers' Movement, and over several successive Muharram (Shi'a) celebrations. Peshawar Additional Division Commissioner Javed Marwat, however, told Consulate that the Peshawar district and division governments are not worried about mass demonstrations or other actions, and that the decision had been requested by the Peshawar DCO rather than directed from higher levels. He added that the DCO has credible information that two additional bomb-equipped cars were in the Peshawar area and that militant gunmen were infiltrating as well, and the imposition of Section 144 was a way of minimizing the risk from those elements.

Comment

¶6. (S/NF) The attacks in Peshawar as well as the May 28 attack in Lahore are reinforcing local worries of escalating militant retaliation for the military campaign in Swat. The cantonment where the majority of government and military offices are headquartered is relatively the most well-guarded sector of Peshawar. With one exception (a suicide attacker on foot in spring 2008), all attacks and other militant-related violence have taken place outside the cantonment. While militants may probe the cantonments defenses, focus still appears to be on opportunities in less defended areas. The Additional Chief Secretary of the FATA Secretariat told post on May 29 that the

Secretariat which is located outside the cantonment had become a high priority target of the militants. Post also continues to see credible threat reporting targeting Consulate facilities, particularly its residential area in University Town.

TRACY